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mony are the positions of the child, the dog, and the serpent. Some of our readers may remember the plaster casts of these two subjects which were exhibited during 1851 in the English Crystal Palace, and for which a prize medal was awarded to the artist. At that time they attracted a great deal of attention, and people began to inquire about their sculptor, a young French artist just rising into fame.

Both groups are admirably adapted for the entrance of a park, a garden, or noble mansion. They are the fitting emblems of faithful guardianship. But in the present state of public taste it does not follow that a work of art should occupy the position which is most appropriate for it. Sculptors and painters both feel this alike. We do not yet thoroughly understand the utility of beauty. Sculpture and painting are regarded rather as ornamental than essential. Yet the culti-

vation of taste, the encouragement of all that can possibly contribute to that desirable end, is one of the most important works of the age. We have great, deep, serious lessons yet to learn in this particular; we are in danger of forgetting that philosophy which teaches us that the beautiful is the priest of the benevolent. When the Great Exhibition of eighteen hundred and fifty-one was open in England, it was said that in sculpture—that formative art in which England has, on the whole, least of all distinguished herself, in which she is even less independent and less technically proficient than the rest of modern Europe—the stand she took was low indeed. In this there was much truth: French and German works threw her into the shade. Why was this?—how did it occur?—how long is the same thing to last? May not the same thing be said of America?



VICTORY AND GRATITUDE.

THE DEAD BRIDAL.

A VENETIAN TALE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

BY JONATHAN FREKE SLINGSBY.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE long twilight of the summer day was growing deeper and fainter, and the shadows of bastion and tower were disappearing in the thickening darkness of night, when two soldiers stood somewhat apart from their comrades who formed the night-watch at the western redoubt.

"This should be the spot designated, if my instructions be

accurate," said one of the two in a low voice; "and I think too, it must be pretty near the hour."

"Aye captain," replied the other, "I know the spot well. Of a dark night one might steal all along yonder marshy ground up to the very walls of the fort, unless they who were on guard had the eyes of owls or the ears of foxes."

"Thou sayest truly, good Hodge," replied Cheke, for he it was, "and, therefore, we have need to be both watchful and wary. Down Hodge, down man," he whispered suddenly—"Remember your old woodcraft—Hist! I hear footsteps."

The two crouched down stealthily under cover of the raised ground—as stealthily as if they were watching in their own island forests beside the run of the deer at midnight. The sounds were at first so faint that none but a practised ear could detect them, and a long interval elapsed between each light foot-fall, indicating that he who thus approached was exercising the utmost caution. Nearer and nearer came the steps, while the two Englishmen held in their breath. At last the steps were heard upon the ditch, and then the person who mounted slid gently down into the dyke, almost into the arms of those who were watching for him. A heavy hand gripped the right arm of the intruder, while at the same time the blade of a poignard glimmered even in the darkness across his eyes, and a voice whispered strongly in his ear—

"Silence, or you die."

The capture was so speedy and so sudden that the captive submitted without a struggle. His arms were unresistingly drawn backwards, and a thong of leather passed tightly round each wrist, which was then drawn together behind.

"Now then, Hodge," said his superior, "move on carefully to the place I told thee of, and take good heed that none see thee. And hark!" and this he added so that the prisoner could hear him, "if this fellow utter one word, just slit his weasand with your dagger, as you would a buck's."

"Aye," replied the archer in a hissing whisper close to the ear of his prisoner; "if the cur should bark or even whine above his breath, he shall have a dog's death." And so saying, he gripped the man by the arm and led him on his way unresistingly, while the English captain returned to visit the night-watch and see that his men were vigilant.

Meantime the archer sped on as quickly and as stealthily as the nature of the ground and the darkness of the night permitted, urging onward his prisoner, who did not venture to break silence. Once, indeed, he stopped short, as if either about to parley or with the dogged determination of going on no further, but a touch of the cold steel in the region of the neck brought him quickly to submission. Thus they passed on skirting the whole side of the fortifications till at length they stood beside a small but massive postern door in the wall, which was concealed by one of the bastions of the rampart. Pausing a moment to take breath, Hodge once more addressed his companion,—

"Now, good fellow, take heed to what I say. When you pass this door, look neither to the right nor to the left, and let not your tongue as much as move in your mouth. A step out of your course or a word from your lips, and by the blessed Saint Hubert thou shalt get the dog's death I promised thee. I'll dash out thy brains with my maule." Having delivered himself of this very emphatic injunction, Hodge Harrington smote with the handle of his mallet two smart strokes upon the door, and, after an interval, two more. After a little time a voice at the inner side of the door demanded in a low tone—

"Chi sta la?"

"Un amico," was the reply.

"Che segno si da?"

"Pazienza."

"Bene: si puo passar."

The noise of shooting back bolts was now heard from within, and in a moment the door was opened, just sufficiently wide to admit the two individuals, and closed and bolted immediately after entrance.

Roger Harrington and his captive crossed the large enclosure into which they were thus admitted till they reached the opposite side, and then passing along a range of buildings, at length stopped before the open door of a small guard-room, within which was seen, by the glimmer of a few smouldering billets of wood, a soldier keeping a half-drowsy watch, as he sat on a bench and leaned his head against the wall. Hodge looked into the room, and ascertaining that the guard was alone, he pushed his prisoner before him and entered.

"How now, comrade!" said the man, rising to his legs: "what's your business?"

"I must see his excellency the general."

"That can't be."

"Nay, but I must see him!"

"Impossible. He has given strict orders that none shall be admitted except the bearer of a certain token; and you are not he, I trow."

"Who knows?" replied Hodge, recollecting himself, and he showed the soldier the ring which Zeno had given him.

"Giusto, Giusto!" said the other; "Cospetto, man! why didst not show me the token at first? Wait a moment here."

The guard knocked at a door at the further end of the room, which was speedily opened by the Greek youth, Alexis.

"Here is one that would see his excellency, and hath warrant for so doing," and he pointed to Hodge.

"Admit him instantly," said the boy, recognising Hodge and the signet which he held up to his view.

Hodge again tightened his grasp of his prisoner, and pushing him before him, they both entered the inner apartment, and the door was closed behind them.

The room into which we must now introduce our readers was one with which they are already familiar. At the further end from that at which the men entered sat a figure, leaning over a table, apparently busied with papers. The light of a large lamp was so managed, that while it illumined all the room in front, it left the man in deep shade. The rays now fell strongly upon those who stood before him. Our burly friend Hodge o' the Hill, drawn up to his full height, with his bluff, ruddy, honest face in respectful repose, as of one who knew he had done his duty, awaited till he was interrogated. The other, who now stood beside him, presented a striking contrast. He was scarcely of the middle height, and looked even less as he hung down his head, and shrank as it were from observation. A figure slight and wiry, looked more so from the maceration that was visible both in his limbs and features. He had no armour upon his body, but was clothed in a tight-fitting buff leathern jerkin, with hose of the same material, and his head was covered with a bonnet of cloth.

Zeno gazed upon the two men for some time in silence. Perchance he might have been occupied in making the contrast between them which we have just noticed; perchance he was deliberating on the course which he should pursue. At length he said,—

"Well, goodman Harrington, thou hast snared the game, like a true forester as thou art."

Hodge's blue eye twinkled gleefully at the allusion to his youthful woodcraft, as he replied—

"By Saint Hubert, even so please your excellency; but by my halidome I am bound to say that he who found out his run and set the snare is as true a woodsman as Hodge o' the Hill; the fellow sprang right into the springes, and we had little to do save to draw them tight about him. So here he is, signore."

"Come hither, fellow," said the general; "lead him forward a little, good archer."

Hodge did as he was required, and Zeno proceeded.

"Thy name, sirrah?"

The man still kept his head down, and made no answer.

"What was thy purport in seeking the camp?"

But the interrogatory like the former was unanswered.

"So! is this thy mood? Well, we shall find the means of making thee speak by and by. Meantime, good yeoman, see if he have not that about him which will give us some information."

The archer forthwith commenced to search the person of the prisoner, a task which seemed comparatively easy from the scantiness of his garb. In vain, however, did he thrust his hand into pouch and opening of the dress, and even removed the bonnet from his head: nothing was found upon him.

"Come," said Zeno, "we must have a cast of thy old trade. Slit me up the fellow's doublet as thou would'st a stag's hide."

Hodge drew forth his dagger in a trice, and commencing at the man's breast he inserted the point of the blade with one hand and with the other holding out the buff coat, he made a smart rip upwards, as a huntsman would do when flaying a deer. The man gave a shriek and started backwards, struggling with his bound arms as much as he was able. In truth, the archer had gone to work a little too dashing, and cut not only the coat but the skin beneath it. At this moment Alexis sprang forward. His keen eye had discovered a small slit in the arm-pit of the coat, which the twisting of the arm had exposed. In a moment he plunged his hand into the spot, drew forth a small folded paper from a concealed pocket and handed it to his master.

Zeno took the paper, opened it, read it slowly and thoughtfully, and then quietly folded it up again.

"Knaves," said he, "eyeing the prisoner fixedly as he rose and stepped into the light, and his voice was cold and stern while he spoke, "Knaves, I have now learned thine errand in despite of thee. Thou art a spy, and comest to plot with traitors. Mark me, then, thy sentence is, that by to-morrow's light thou shalt hang like a dog from the next parapet. Nothing can avert thy doom, unless that thou shalt truly inform me upon such subjects as I shall interrogate thee."

This speech, and the glare of the speaker's eye, were not without their effect on him for whom they were intended. The fellow looked up and said doggedly,

"Well then, signore, unbind my wrists, for they are nearly cut through with the thongs, and I shall answer your questions so far as I can."

"Loosen the bands somewhat, but do not release his hands altogether," said Zeno. "There, that will do. Now, fellow, tell me what provisions have ye in Chioggia."

"Scarce a day's food—not as much as a rat left."

"Have you had any communication with the Genoese fleet of late?"

"Not since the last sally."

"Then you are without hope in that quarter?"

"Utterly."

"Well, and if the notable scheme that thou votest of"—and here he pointed to the paper—"if it should fail, what then is proposed to be done?"

"To throw the gates open and surrender unconditionally."

"Good. What may be the number of souls in Chioggia?"

"About four thousand, including those on board the vessels."

"And how many galleys remain?"

"Nineteen."

Zeno proceeded to put a great many further questions, to which the man replied; he then said,

"Thou hast answered me truly on some points, I know, and it may be that thou hast spoken truth on all. This we shall know hereafter. Meantime, thou shalt be kept in safety, and receive good treatment, to abide the issue. Take him hence, Alexis, and let him be secured in a safe place and strongly guarded."

The Greek motioned silently to the Genoese, who followed him out of the apartment, leaving Roger Harrington alone with the generalissimo of the Venetian army.

"Good fellow," said Zeno, "thou hast served me with skill and fidelity, and thy services shall not go unrequited. But as yet thou hast done but a part of the work that I design for thee. Say, art thou ready to proceed in it?"

"Noble general!" said Hodge. "My own captain, Sir William Cheke, hath told me that I may in all things do thy will. I have served long under him and know him well, and, by our blessed St. George, I shall ever do his behest; for he would not that I should do aught that an honest soldier should shrink from."

"It is well said, good fellow," said Zeno admiringly. "Now listen to me, for I have much to disclose to thee, and much wherein to instruct thee. Sit down, man, sit down; and give good heed to what I say."

Hodge, thus invited, sat down on a low bench in a manner at once respectful but manly. Then Zeno proceeded to

detail to him matters of great and pressing import. What the nature of these communications was we shall not at present disclose. Suffice it to say, that the night was somewhat advanced before the English yeoman passed out from the apartment of the Venetian general.

When Roger Harrington departed from the presence of Zeno, he hastened through the fort till he reached the quarters of the English archers. Here he found Sir William Cheke awaiting his return, and he forthwith craved a private audience with his captain. The result of their deliberations was, that the archer divested himself of his arms and even of some of his ordinary habiliments, and arrayed himself, as nearly as possible, in a style that did not betoken either his particular nation or military calling. Retaining only his dagger, he threw over his person a large cloak, and placed upon his head a bonnet of Genoa velvet, which he drew down over his brows. Thus equipped, he again sallied forth as stealthily as he had entered, and made his way in the darkness of the night till he reached the place where the mercenaries under the command of Roberto di Recanati were located. One of the Italian lances who kept the guard arrested his steps, whereupon Hodge required to be conducted to the condottiere on urgent business, whispering at the same time in the ear of the soldier some secret word. Apparently his coming was not altogether unexpected, and he was without further delay conducted into the presence of Recanati, who had not yet retired to rest. The condottiere looked keenly at his visitor, and then demanded,

"Your business?"

"This will inform you, signore," was the reply, as Hodge handed him the cartel which had been previously taken from the captured emissary.

Recanati perused the missive with deep attention, and pondered long upon its import. At length he broke silence again,

"He who writes certifies for thee, that thou art trustworthy and may be freely spoken with."

The soldier replied merely by an inclination of his head.

"Well, then, it is an onerous undertaking and full of peril."

"Doubtless, signore," was the reply, "it will need caution as well as courage; nevertheless, if the matter be kept secret, success seems almost certain."

"And suppose it be so, who is to certify to me that I shall receive the money?"

"Here is your security, noble capitano. The name signed to this document guarantees it to you, which I am authorised to give to you, upon your signing the stipulations in the paper which I have given to you, and which I am to bear back to those who sent me."

The document which Recanati now examined was apparently satisfactory, he accordingly signed the paper and returned it to his visitor, observing—

"Well then, be it so; but take heed, good friend, how thou guardest this packet, and see that you make your way hence speedily."

"Aye, signore, fear not for me. I shall find my way as safely back as I found it hither. Let me, too, warn you to put yonder writing in the safest place about your person—let it not for a moment out of your own keeping. Buona notte, signor capitano; it is time that I were on my return."

Having said this, Roger Harrington once more bent his steps towards the quarters of the general.

"By my faith, good Roger Harrington," 'twas thus the honest yeoman soliloquised—"thou art rising in the world since thou ledest the green fields by the pleasant Trent. Thou wert not content with shooting a fat buck in the forest, but thou shouldst take to the wild life of soldiering, and let fly thy shafts at thine own kind. And now, God wot, thou art turning to higher game, and taking counsel with thy betters, and joining in their schemes that are well nigh too subtle for thy simple head. By Saint Hubert, I don't altogether like such matters, though, nor understand them over well. It seems like trapping foxes or such like vermin, and not like true woodcraft. Well, well, I have got safely through it so far; but, by my halidome, I would rather fight two hours by daylight than plot or scheme one hour by night."